

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed March 20, 2003 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 1-4 are canceled. Claims 5 and 6 are added. Only claims 5 and 6 are pending in this application, with claim 5 being the sole independent claim. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as herein amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action mailed March 20, 2003, claims 1 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over applicant's admitted prior art in Fig. 4 for the application ("APA").

Claims 1 and 3 are now canceled and new claims 5 and 6 are submitted. New claims 5 and 6 are drawn to an assembly of an optical connector component which includes a plug frame 33 and a ferrule 2. A member (i.e. flange) 32 affixed to the ferrule is used for floatingly supporting the ferrule in the plug frame. Since the claimed plug frame is made of one piece, the ferrule must be inserted therein and then held therein. To accomplish this, the present invention includes projections 37 on the member attached to the ferrule which are arranged so as to allow the ferrule to be inserted in the plug frame. The projections then hold the ferrule in place by engaging holes 50 in the plug frame to prevent movement of the ferrule in a first direction. The member also abuts against an abutment portion 53 of the plug frame to prevent movement of the ferrule in a second direction. Independent claim 5 recites that the "projecting portion of said member abuts against the side wall of the hole of said plug frame to prevent movement of said member in the first direction, and the engagement portion of said member abuts against said abutment portion of said plug frame to prevent movement of said member in the second direction".

The applicant's prior art ("APA") plug case assembly shown in Fig. 4 of the application fails to teach or suggest the claimed member having a projection engaged in a hole of a plug frame. Instead, APA teaches that the plug frame has an abutment portion 10 for preventing movement of the ferrule in one direction and a further abutment portion 21 for preventing movement of the ferrule in another direction. The prior art plug case assembly includes a two part plug frame 5, 6. In this case, the ferrule can be first inserted into a first plug frame part 5. The other plug frame part 6 can then be placed over the ferrule and attached to the first plug frame part 5. Once the two parts are connected, the ferrule is held between the two parts 5, 6 by the abutment portions 10, 21. The disadvantages of such an approach are described in the paragraph spanning pages 4 and 5 of the present specification.

In contrast to APA, the claimed optical connector component of the present application includes a one piece plug frame, wherein the ferrule must be inserted into the one piece plug frame and then held in the one piece plug frame. This is accomplished using the claimed projections on the member affixed to the ferrule. The prior art shown in Fig. 4 fails to disclose teach or suggest that "said projecting portion of said member abuts against the side wall of the hole of said plug frame to prevent movement of said member in the first direction, and the engagement portion of said member abuts against said abutment portion of said plug frame to prevent movement of said member in the second direction", as recited in independent claim 5, because a member having projections is not required for holding the ferrule in the two-piece plug frame. Further details of this unique arrangement, and its advantages over APA, can be found on page 10 of the present specification.

In view of the above remarks, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 5 is allowable over APA. Dependent claim 6, being dependent on independent claim 5, is allowable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 5.

The application is now deemed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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